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made the ascent and reported five fine eggs. Of course they had to be unpacked again when he got safely down and to us they looked much handsomer than they ever would in a large series, to the owner of which they would simply be known as a dark typical set. The eggs were laid in a little shallow

on the ledge, without a straw near them and no nest was constructed. Again on horseback we plodded the weary miles homeward, with the crickets and frogs piping a march to which the Bittern furnished bass and of which the whistle of Wilson's Snipe overhead was treble.

### Winter Birds of Shanghai.

BY MILTON S. RAY, SAN FRANCISCO.

[Read before the Northern Division of the Cooper Orn. Club, May 6, 1899.]

**A**FTER leaving Japan in February, 1898, at a season when birds were by no means numerous, I was surprised on arriving at Shanghai at the abundance of bird life. Along the Whang-Poo River, on which Shanghai is situated, water and marsh birds were almost as common as land birds are about the city. Excepting the Tree Sparrow [*Passer montanus*] the Magpie [*Pica caudata*] or Rice-bird as it is called is the most numerous, and although the trees were yet bare, I observed several nests completed and a large number building. These nests were so common that scarcely a group of trees but contained one or more.

Along the muddy river the Black Kite [*Milvus ater*] was plentiful. A common sight is a dozen or more of these large birds resting between their day's labor on the cross cable or spring stay of the ships about the harbor. I observed one of these birds with a Tree Sparrow in its claws which it pulled apart as it flew along.

A bird of interest is the Ringed Crow. It is an odd looking bird with a broad white ring running around the neck and down across the breast. At times large flocks of Rooks, with a sprinkling of Crows, assemble in the grassy interior of the race-course in search of worms. The Crows are made conspicuous by their size and peculiar markings. Bubbling Well Road is the principal thoroughfare of the residence portion of the English settlement. Here in the large gardens, birds are very common. One morning as I was walking along this road, by a small stream, I came upon a pair of Eastern Kingfishers [*Alcedo inspida bengalensis*] I had hardly time to examine them closely when the one

nearest me plunged almost perpendicularly into the water and emerged in a moment with a small minnow. This bird has beautiful dark blue wings and a rich chestnut breast. Further on I noticed on the lawn of a garden a pair of Masked Hawfinches in company with blackbirds, thrushes and pipits. These were the only Hawfinches I saw during my stay and was informed they are quite rare.

Passing on, my attention was attracted by a large flock of doves [*Turtus chinensis*] which so closely resembled our own Mourning Dove that from a distance they were indistinguishable. This dove has a white mottled patch on its neck and the tail is broadly tipped with white. Returning, a bright colored Titmouse flitted across the road and then a large Flycatcher left his perch in pursuit of an insect and I felt sad to think I would have to leave this rich field so soon. No doubt the abundance of bird life is accounted for by the protection they receive from the Chinese, whose religion prevents their wanton destruction. In Japan however it is just the opposite. I noticed in a Japanese taxidermist's more than 100 skins of the beautiful Kingfisher and an equal number of the brilliantly colored Wag-tails, beside a horde of Finches, Thrushes and larger birds. Of what use such large numbers of skins can be is a mystery to me. Aside from the wild birds, the bird stores of Old Shanghai are worthy of notice. Here thousands of birds—Canaries, Finches, Thrushes, Parrots, etc., are crowded in small wooden cages and the varied concert midst the squalor of a native Chinese city is a sight not easily forgotten.